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Letter dated 22 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Chad to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to write to you in my capacity of representative of the country chairing the Group of Five for the Sahel and the Ministerial Coordination Platform for the Sahel, tasked to coordinate the effective implementation of Sahel initiatives and strategies, as well as on behalf of the permanent representatives of the member States of the Group of Five for the Sahel in New York, with respect to the letter dated 14 January 2016 from the Secretary-General on the strategic review of the Office of his Special Envoy for the Sahel, in which he proposed, inter alia, to merge the Office into the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA).

The member States of the Group of Five for the Sahel are deeply troubled by the idea of merging those two entities, which contradicts the spirit and the letter of the latest two statements by the President of the Security Council on the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel (S/PRST/2014/17 and S/PRST/2015/24). In the latter statement, the Security Council looked forward to considering the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his strategic review of the Office of his Special Envoy for the Sahel and requested the inclusion of recommendations on the location of the Office, in consultation with the Member States of the Sahel region, including the five priority countries, namely Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. The Council did not request recommendations on merging the Office into UNOWA. In this regard, the member States of the Group of Five for the Sahel ask the members of the Council to keep to their decision and to maintain the Office as a stand-alone entity, while continuing to strengthen it. In addition, it should be recalled that, at its sixty-ninth session, the General Assembly considered the issue extensively, through its Administrative and Budgetary Committee, and requested the Secretary-General to keep the leadership arrangement of the Office under review, following queries by the Africa Group (see General Assembly resolution 69/262).

Furthermore, it is critical to take into account the final communiqué of the Heads of State of the Group of Five for the Sahel, adopted on 20 November 2015 at a high-level summit in N'Djamena, in which the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel participated, prior to the strategic review of the Office. In that communiqué, the Heads of State of the five priority countries of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel asked the United Nations to strengthen and relocate the Office to the headquarters of the Group of Five for the Sahel, in Nouakchott, with a view to

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improving coordination and cooperation in the implementation of joint projects for the Sahel countries and of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel (see annex, antepenultimate paragraph).

Bearing in mind that Chad is not a West African country, I ask the members of the Security Council to give utmost consideration to the views expressed in the present letter, which are also those of the countries of the Sahel that are most affected, particularly Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger.

Finally, despite the statement dated 8 December 2015 of the President of the Security Council (S/PRST/2015/24), in which the Council called upon the Secretariat to hold at least one meeting per quarter with the permanent representatives of the member States of the Group of Five for the Sahel in New York, to share information and follow up on the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, the representatives have neither been consulted with respect to the findings of the strategic review nor received any draft report of the strategic review.

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mahamat Zene **Cherif**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex to the letter dated 22 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Chad to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: French]

Final communiqué of the summit of Heads of State of the Group of Five for the Sahel

An ordinary summit of Heads of State of the Group of Five for the Sahel (Sahel G-5) was held on 20 November 2015 in N'Djamena, Chad.

The following attended the Summit:

For Burkina Faso, His Excellency Mr. Michel Kafando, Transitional President of Burkina Faso;

For the Republic of Mali, His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, President of the Republic;

For the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, President of the Republic;

For the Republic of the Niger, His Excellency Mr. Mahamadou Issoufou, President of the Republic;

For the Republic of Chad, His Excellency Mr. Idriss Deby Itno, President of the Republic.

The Heads of State at the outset expressed their strong condemnation of the hostage-taking committed that day at the Radisson Hotel in Bamako, Mali, and of all acts of terrorism around the world, particularly those perpetrated by the Boko Haram sect in the Lake Chad basin.

The Heads of State, having noted the summary of the conclusions of the Council of Ministers,

Undertake to increase solidarity and cohesion and to pool their efforts in taking action at all levels so as to reach consensus on the major issues of concern to them;

Decide:

- To establish a regional military academy of the Sahel G-5 in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, to be opened in 2016;
- To establish a Sahel G-5 joint force;
- To establish a regional airline in order to improve the connectivity of the countries of the Sahel G-5;
- To construct a railway line linking Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, the Niger and Chad;

Welcome:

- The adoption of a road map setting out the framework for cooperation between the Sahel G-5 and the United Nations;

– The adoption of a road map setting out the framework for cooperation between the Sahel G-5 and the European Union;

– The declaration of the technical and financial partners following their meeting of 19 November 2015 with the ministers of the Sahel G-5;

Note with satisfaction:

– The adoption of the rules of procedure of the Defence and Security Committee;

– The adoption of the agreement on the operation and organization of the security cooperation platform;

– The adoption of the operating charter of the military partnership for cross-border cooperation;

– The adoption of the text relating to the missions of the Sahel G-5 defence and security expert;

– The transfer of the Sahel Security College to the authority of the Sahel G-5 permanent secretariat;

– The launch of the process to establish the Sahel Centre for Threat Analysis and Early Warning;

Instruct the relevant ministers:

– To take steps to finalize the development and security strategy and update the priority investment programme with a view to adopting them during the first quarter of 2016;

– To design, as a matter of urgency, high-impact projects for road, railway, energy and agricultural infrastructure;

– To organize, as soon as possible, a donors' round table with a view to financing the priority investment programme;

Approve:

– A two-year term of office for the chair;

– Expansion of the Council of Ministers to include the ministers for foreign affairs of the Sahel G-5;

– The principle of abolishing visas among the member countries of the Sahel G-5, provided that appropriate security measures are taken.

The Heads of State,

Concerned by the situation of young people,

Aware that the Sahel G-5 is an area of origin and transit for migrants and that there can be no development or security without healthy, educated and happy young people able to contribute fully to national efforts and advancement,

Undertake to invest fully in the welfare of young people;

Instruct the ministers for youth to design and implement integrated projects to that end;

Invite the technical and financial partners to treat youth issues as a cross-cutting theme in all their actions;

Welcome the commitment of the European Union to provide substantial support for the Multinational Joint Task Force to combat Boko Haram and invite all partners to support the deployment of the Task Force for the complete elimination of that common enemy;

Express their gratitude to the cooperation partners for their firm commitment to the Sahel G-5 and encourage them to put that commitment into practice as soon as possible;

Call upon the international community to support the efforts of the Sahel G-5 to secure the region and promote its development;

Encourage and support the ongoing efforts for effective implementation of the inter-Malian peace agreement;

Call for the adoption of a political solution aimed at restoring peace in Libya;

Congratulate all parties in Burkina Faso on the positive resolution of the crisis that followed the coup d'état of 16 September 2015 and reiterate their support for the transition process;

Encourage the holding of peaceful elections in Burkina Faso;

Request that the United Nations strengthen the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel and relocate it to the headquarters of the Sahel G-5 with a view to improving coordination and cooperation in the implementation of joint projects for the Sahel countries and of the United Nations integrated strategy;

Encourage steps to adapt the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) to the current security situation in Mali.

The Heads of State express their deep gratitude to their brother, President Idriss Deby Itno, incoming Chair of the Sahel G-5, and to the Government and people of Chad, for the generous hospitality, warm African welcome and care accorded to them throughout their stay in N'Djamena.

Done at N'Djamena, 20 November 2015